

# QUASI EXPERIMENTALIS COGNITIO: A HISTORICAL APPROACH TO THE MEANING OF ST. THOMAS

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IT IS the teaching of St. Thomas Aquinas that the just man enjoys a quasi-experimental knowledge of the divine Persons inhabiting his soul.<sup>1</sup> A historical investigation of St. Thomas' meaning reveals that two modern and important "Thomistic" interpretations—those of A. Gardeil, O.P., and R. Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P.—are in fact gratuitous, lacking solid foundation in the writings of St. Thomas. The purpose of these pages is to present the evidence that leads to this judgment.<sup>2</sup>

To this end we intend, first, to summarize briefly three modern interpretations of *quasi experimentalis cognitio*. Secondly, we shall study the notion of experimental knowledge in the writings of the principal Scholastics immediately preceding and coeval with St. Thomas; in this way we shall learn what the term "experimental knowledge" meant at the time St. Thomas was writing his theology.<sup>3</sup> Finally, in the light of this historical context we shall re-examine the pertinent texts of St. Thomas.

## THREE MODERN INTERPRETATIONS

### *Theory of Ambrose Gardeil, O.P.: Immediate "Supraintentional" Perception*

Ambrose Gardeil (d. 1931) subscribes to the objective theory of the inhabitation defended by John of St. Thomas: the Trinity is present

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *In 1 Sent.*, d. 14, q. 2, a. 2, ad 3m; *ibid.*, d. 15, q. 2, ad 5m; *ibid.*, d. 15, *Expositio secundae partis textus*; *ibid.*, d. 16, q. 1, a. 2, sol.; *Sum. theol.* 1, q. 43, a. 5, ad 2m.

<sup>2</sup> To support its main contention, this article includes much of the evidence gathered by the author in his *Experimental Knowledge of the Indwelling Trinity: An Historical Study of the Doctrine of St. Thomas* (Mundelein, 1958).

<sup>3</sup> The necessity of this method—studying the texts of St. Thomas in their historical setting and tradition—has been pointed out by O. Lottin, "Pour un commentaire historique de la morale de S. Th. d'Aquin," *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale* 11 (1939) 270–85. P. Galtier emphasizes the need of this method specifically in studying the question of *experimentalis cognitio*; cf. *L'Habitation en nous des trois personnes* (Rome, 1949) pp. 179, 193.

in the just soul as an object of experimental knowledge and love. According to Gardeil, the experience which the just man can have is twofold, affective and intellectual.

The first experience of God is affective, an experience of love. The act of charity is an experiential act, because it does not attain its object through concepts but directly in itself. But it is an experience of a certain kind, an affective experience. This is in some way comparable to sensation and in other ways unlike it. The affective experience is like sensation in that its object is present to it and in that it is, in its own distinctive way, instructive or informative, if not of the mind specifically, at least of the whole man; that is why the affective experience of charity is so often compared to taste, since it affords both enjoyment and information. However, this experience is not altogether the same as that of sensation, for we do not immediately touch God as the senses do their material object; rather, this experience of God is said to be immediate in the sense that, since it is feeling and not knowledge, it excludes any intermediary of the conceptual order.<sup>4</sup>

But man's total experience of God is not solely affective. It is also intellectual, thanks to the gift of wisdom. This intellectual experience is an immediate, direct perception of the divine Persons. This means, first of all, that it is not discursive knowledge. Gardeil admits that the just man can conclude with moral certitude that he is in the state of grace from certain signs in his soul; but such an inference, he explains, does not pertain to the essence of the mystical experience proper to wisdom, even though it may accompany it. Accordingly, the signs or indices by which, according to John of St. Thomas, the divine Persons are manifested to the just man are, ontologically speaking, effects of God's presence; but they are not the object of the mystical experience. God is the object of the experience; the signs or indices are merely "quo experitur non quod cognoscitur."<sup>5</sup> Secondly, this immediate perception is "supraintentional": that is to say, it is had without concepts.<sup>6</sup> Indeed, it is achieved even without impressed species, and in that respect is even more intimate than sensation. It is an immediate

<sup>4</sup> A. Gardeil, O.P., "L'Expérience mystique pure dans le cadre des 'Missions divines,'" *Vie spirituelle, Supplément* 32 (1932) [65]-[76].

<sup>5</sup> A. Gardeil, O.P., *La structure de l'âme et l'expérience mystique* 2 (Paris, 1927) 255.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 240: "Et tout d'abord, dans l'état présent de l'âme sainte, caractérisé par le règne de la foi intentionnelle, il est un contact objectif réel et intime de l'âme avec

experience of the divine Persons dwelling within the soul: there is no *medium in quo*; in fact, there is absolutely no created objective intermedium at all by which or in which God is so perceived.<sup>7</sup>

Notwithstanding, Gardeil insists, this immediate experience is not intuitive vision, since it falls short of immediate physical contact with the divine Reality and retains the obscurity of faith.<sup>8</sup>

Of course, Gardeil explains, actual knowledge of this kind is not required for the invisible mission; sufficient is the habitual cognition which consists in the reception of charity and the gift of wisdom, habits which bear the proper similitudes of the divine Persons. Nor is such cognition mere potency, because it is had virtually in the gifts of grace.<sup>9</sup>

In brief, then, what did St. Thomas mean by *cognitio experimentalis* in the context of the divine missions? According to Gardeil, he meant an experience proper to wisdom. This is immediate cognition of the divine Persons in the just soul: there is no objective intermedium at all in this knowledge, not even concepts. Yet it is not vision of, not physical contact with, its object, but retains the obscurity of faith. It is not necessary that the just man have this experimental knowledge in act; it suffices that he have it virtually or habitually in the gifts of sanctifying grace.<sup>10</sup>

*Theory of Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P.: Mediate,  
"Supradiscursive" Knowledge*

Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, like Gardeil, teaches that the presence of the Trinity in the just soul is an objective presence involving a

Dieu qui n'a rien d'intentionnelle. . . ." Cf. "L'Expérience mystique," p. [75]: "Cette perception ou expérience n'a rien d'une connaissance par concepts."

<sup>7</sup> "L'Expérience mystique," p. [74]: "La perception de Dieu par ou dans un intermédiaire objectif créé est absolument absent. . . ."

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. [74]: "[This experience is said to be] *quasi, comme* expérimental, parce que, si la connaissance des divines personnes est, en soi, totalement expérimentale, s'opérant au contact physique de son objet, la communication qui nous est faite de cette connaissance divine au cours de notre vie terrestre ne va pas jusqu'au contact physique avec la réalité divine, réservé pour la vision béatifique. . . ." Cf. *Structure*, p. 240, and "Examen de conscience," *Revue thomiste*, n.s. 12 (1929) 272.

<sup>9</sup> *Structure*, pp. 90, 129, 142-44; "Examen," p. 278.

<sup>10</sup> Prominent among the followers of Gardeil should be noted H. F. Dondaine (*Somme théologique* [Paris, 1950] Appendice 2, pp. 449-53) and G. Philips ("De godserving in de heiligmakende genade volgens Sint Thomas van Aquino," in *Verzamelde Opstellen opgedragen aan Mgr Van Noort* [Utrecht, 1944] pp. 173-94).

quasi-experimental knowledge of the inhabiting Persons. But his interpretation of experimental knowledge is a little different from Gardeil's.

First of all, one thing is certain, he says, and beyond dispute: this knowledge is not discursive, does not include an inference; that is to say, the just man does not conclude to the presence of God from an effect in the soul. But at the same time the quasi experience is not immediate knowledge, for the only truly immediate knowledge of God is vision: there is no such thing as immediate experimental knowledge which is obscure. The only immediate experience of God possible to the just man in this life is an affective one, an experience which is not in the intellect but in the will.

But if experimental knowledge is not discursive and not immediate, what is it? Can some intermediate knowledge be distinguished? Gardeil apparently did not think so, because for him all experimental knowledge is immediate knowledge. But Garrigou-Lagrange postulates a third kind of knowledge, which is neither discursive nor immediate: it is knowledge of God through the effects of filial affection which He produces in us. Such is quasi-experimental knowledge, mediate knowledge which is "supradiscursive." The medium, the effects of filial love, is not only that which is known but also that by which God is known. In a word, therefore, while Gardeil "tient pourtant . . . que l'effet d'amour filial produit en nous par Dieu est *id quo experitur, non ut quod cognoscitur*," Garrigou-Lagrange insists: "Il nous semble certain au contraire que cet effet est à la fois ce que est immédiatement expérimenté et ce par quoi nous connaissons *quasi experimentaliter* et sans raisonnement la présence vivifiante de Dieu."<sup>11</sup> Accordingly, the just man (1) immediately experiences the effect of filial love which God has produced in his soul, and (2) by this effect, without reasoning, cognizes the presence of God quasi-experimentally.

But why, then, does St. Thomas refer to this knowledge as *quasi-experimental*? He does so for two reasons. The first is that in this life we do not, properly speaking, experience God immediately, but only through the effects of filial love which He produces in us. The second is that the just man cannot differentiate with absolute certainty

<sup>11</sup> R. Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P., "L'Habitation de la sainte Trinité et l'expérience mystique," *Revue thomiste*, n. s. 11 (1928) 472, n. 4.

between the supernatural effect of filial love and a certain natural, sentimental lifting up of the heart which resembles it.

Finally, in the theory of Garrigou-Lagrange, the quasi-experimental knowledge pertains to infused contemplation. At first it is only habitual: the divine Persons sent to the just soul are, in the very production of the gifts of grace, experimentally knowable; and this is all that is required for the invisible mission. But thanks to a special inspiration of the gift of wisdom by the Holy Spirit, this habitual cognition becomes actual experimental knowledge; and this, according to Garrigou-Lagrange, is but the normal development of the gifts of sanctifying grace.

Accordingly, Garrigou-Lagrange interprets St. Thomas' *cognitio experimentalis* as neither discursive knowledge nor immediate perception but as "supradiscursive" and mediate in the effect of filial love.<sup>12</sup>

#### *Theory of Paul Galtier, S.J.: Discursive Knowledge*

Paul Galtier, in a polemic work against Gardeil,<sup>13</sup> argues for an ontological theory of the inhabitation, explaining the special presence by efficient and exemplary causality. He accuses his adversaries of faulty method, namely, of taking formulas of St. Thomas out of their historical setting and tradition. Thus, we should not be too quick, he cautions, to interpret *quasi experimentalis cognitio* from the strict sense of the word alone.<sup>14</sup> For St. Thomas attaches to it a meaning far different from a direct and immediate perception of the divine Persons: for him, experimental knowledge is not direct cognition of God Himself, but indirect, in the effects in which He manifests Himself. From certain signs perceived in the soul, such as delight in God, peace of conscience, and so forth, a just man can conjecture that he possesses the gifts of grace; he cannot know this for certain, because

<sup>12</sup> Garrigou-Lagrange has explained his doctrine in "L'Habitation," which has been reprinted practically verbatim as the third chapter of Vol. 1 of *L'Amour de Dieu*, and again as the fourth chapter of Vol. 1 of *Les trois âges de la vie intérieure* (Paris, 1938). He also explained it, to some extent, in *Perfection chrétienne et contemplation* 2 (Paris, 1923) "Eclaircissement," [109]-[120], and in "Utrum mens seipsam per essentiam cognoscat an per aliquam speciem," *Angelicum* 5 (1928) 37-54. Francis Cunningham, O.P., in *The Indwelling of the Trinity* (Dubuque, 1955) pp. 196-211, clearly adopts Garrigou-Lagrange's theory.

<sup>13</sup> Galtier, *op. cit.*, pp. 191-200.

<sup>14</sup> *L'Habitation*, pp. 179, 193.

he cannot know for certain that his acts proceed from a supernatural principle; for the acts of charity and of the gifts are not perceptibly different from the acts of natural love and the simple moral virtues, nor are they accompanied by such sweetness as to be otherwise inexplicable. These gifts of grace then lead, in turn, to a knowledge of the divine Persons inhabiting the soul, achieved in virtue of a double inference: first, from the experimental signs in the soul to the gifts of grace, and then from these gifts to the divine Persons in whose image they are modeled.<sup>15</sup>

Thus, for Galtier, *quasi experimentalis cognitio* means indirect knowledge of the divine Persons achieved by discursive reasoning. It is probable knowledge, habitual or virtual<sup>16</sup> in the gifts of grace; but with few exceptions, such as baptized infants and the insane, it can be readily actualized in every just man.<sup>17</sup>

Hence we see that modern theologians are not in agreement on the meaning of quasi-experimental knowledge of the divine Persons dwelling in the just man's soul. According to Galtier, St. Thomas was thinking of discursive knowledge of the divine Persons had by conjecturing from certain savorous effects experienced in the soul to the divine presence as the probable cause; and while this knowledge does not have to be actual in order that there be an invisible mission, but need only be habitual in the possession of the habits of sanctifying grace, nevertheless it does become actual, as a matter of fact, in most just men. According to Gardeil and Garrigou-Lagrange, on the other hand, St. Thomas meant neither discursive knowledge nor, of course, intuitive vision, but rather imperfect, obscure, uncertain cognition. For Gardeil, it is immediate knowledge of the divine Persons without any objective medium or species, suprainentional knowledge; thus, the effects of God's presence in the just soul are *quo experitur* but not *quod cognoscitur*. For Garrigou-Lagrange, however, it is mediate knowledge of the divine Persons in the effect of filial love which God produces in the just soul; this effect of filial love is both *quod* and *quo cognoscitur*.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 194.

<sup>16</sup> That is to say, one has the *power* to acquire actual knowledge, thanks to the gifts of grace.

<sup>17</sup> Thomas Fitzgerald, *De inhabitatione Spiritus sancti doctrina s. Thomae Aquinatis* (Mundelein, 1949) pp. 65-72, defends Galtier's interpretation.

Gardeil, Garrigou-Lagrange, Galtier, and their adherents have arrived at their explanations of quasi-experimental knowledge by speculating on the meaning of the expression as it appears in St. Thomas' writings. But they have not studied the expression, as Galtier recommends, in its historical setting and tradition. But this is what is imperative. For, unless the contrary be demonstrated, the presumption is that St. Thomas used the term *experimentalis cognitio* with the meaning that was commonly attached to it by his immediate predecessors and contemporaries.

*EXPERIMENTALIS COGNITIO BETWEEN 1150 AND 1255*

*Mitti est percipi*

Peter Lombard (d. 1160) in the fifteenth distinction of the first volume of his celebrated *Sententiarum libri quatuor* (1150–52) explains that the Son of God is said to be “sent” not only “cum visibiliter mundo apparuit carne indutus” but also “cum se in animas pias sic transfert, ut ab eis percipiatur ac cognoscatur.” In confirmation he cites from the fourth book of St. Augustine’s *De trinitate* the text which is to be interpreted by St. Thomas as implying an experimental knowledge of the invisible mission: “Et tunc unicuique mittitur, cum a quoquam cognoscitur atque percipitur, quantum cognosci et percipi potest pro captu vel proficientis in Deum, vel perfectae in Deo animae rationalis.” The Lombard pursues this question no further; nor do the succeeding theologians, Robert of Melun or Gandulf of Bologna, after him. But Peter of Poitiers, Lombard’s most faithful pupil, is too profound a theologian to miss the important problem that is implied. Writing his *Sentences* at Paris between 1169 and 1176, probably before 1170, Peter argues that no one can be said to possess the divine Persons unless he possesses Them with grace and charity; mere knowledge is not enough. Therefore, he concludes: “Quod ergo dicit Augustinus tunc mitti Filium cum cuiusquam mente cognoscitur, intelligendum est de cognitione devotionis. Licet enim aliquis cognitionem habeat modo de Filio, etsi prius non haberet illam, non ideo dicitur ei mitti, nisi caritatem habeat.”<sup>18</sup> Thus Peter points out that it is not mere knowledge that is required for the invisible mission of the divine Persons but knowledge together with charity. Such knowl-

<sup>18</sup> *Sententiae*, lib. 1, cap. 36.

edge he calls *cognitio devotionis*. This important distinction, finally brought into sharp focus by Peter of Poitiers, was overlooked in the *Summa* of Peter of Capua (written between 1201 and 1202) and in the anonymous Codex Vaticanus latinus 10754 (composed between 1193 and 1210). Prevostin of Cremona in his *Summa theologica*<sup>19</sup> (1206–9), William of Auxerre in his *Summa aurea* (1215–29), and William of Paris in the numerous monographs he composed at Paris between 1223 and 1249<sup>20</sup> also make no further comment on the just man's knowledge of the invisible mission, although each of them, as we shall see below,<sup>21</sup> made some significant observations on experimental knowledge in other contexts.

To Hugh of St. Cher, O.P. (d. 1264), goes the credit not only of grasping the importance of Peter of Poitiers' distinction but of making a contribution of his own. This occurs in Book 1, distinction 15, of his *Commentary on the Sentences* (1230–35), where he comments on the following text of Peter Lombard:

Praeter eam igitur duobus modis dicitur mitti, scilicet vel cum visibiliter mundo apparuit carne indutus vel cum se in animas pias sic transfert, ut ab eis percipiatur ac cognoscatur. . . . Et tunc unicuique mittitur, cum a quoquam cognoscitur atque percipitur, quantum cognosci et percipi potest pro captu vel proficientis in Deum, vel perfectae in Deo animae rationalis.<sup>22</sup>

On this text Hugh inscribes the following significant gloss: “. . . *transfert* fide vel affectu; *percipiatur* affectu; *ac cognoscatur* intellectu; . . . *vel proficientis* in via; *vel perfecte* in patria; vel utrumque in via: perfecte quantum ad contemplantes, proficientis quantum ad activos.”<sup>23</sup> Hugh's analysis of the Lombard's text is penetrating. For he points out that *percipiatur ac cognoscatur* is not tautological but contains a very significant distinction: for *cognoscatur*, he explains, refers to an act of the intellect, or rather (as is indicated in the gloss on *transfert*) an act of the intellect aided by faith; *percipiatur*, on the contrary, refers to an act of the *affectus*. Peter of Poitier had pointed out that sheer knowledge is not enough for the invisible mission; one also must have charity. Hugh of St. Cher's contribution to the develop-

<sup>19</sup> Cod. Vat. lat. 1174.

<sup>20</sup> These were gathered together to form a kind of Christian encyclopedia, the *Magisterium divinale*.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. *infra*, pp. 370 ff.

<sup>22</sup> Lib. 1, d. 15.

<sup>23</sup> Cod. Vat. lat. 1098, f. 16r.



ment of this doctrine is that he sees this concept of love implied in the word *percipitur*.<sup>24</sup> We shall see later the decisive influence that Hugh's insight had on St. Thomas when he came to write on this same matter.

After Hugh, Roland of Cremona passes over the whole question in his *Summa* (ca. 1233)<sup>25</sup> and Richard Fishacre in his *Commentary on the Sentences* (1240–43) repeats Hugh of St. Cher's gloss practically verbatim.<sup>26</sup>

It is in the commentaries of the Franciscans that we find the question of the just man's knowledge of the invisible mission taken up with renewed vigor. A question that seems to have bothered all of the Franciscan masters was: Is the Holy Spirit also sent whenever the Son is sent? The main argument for an affirmative response was: Whenever the Son is sent, the created gift of wisdom is infused in the soul; but whenever the gift of wisdom is infused in the soul, the Holy Spirit is sent, because wisdom is a gift of the Holy Spirit, who is always given with His gifts; therefore, whenever the Son is sent, the Holy Spirit is also sent. This argument and its conclusion were opposed by Alexander of Hales in his *Commentary on the Sentences* (1223–27), by the anonymous glossographer of the commentary of Codex Vaticanus latinus 691, by Odo Rigaud in his *Commentary on the Sentences* (1243–45), and by the author (probably John of La Rochelle) of the tractate *De missione* (ca. 1246) in Book 1 of the *Summa fratris Alexandri*. The efforts of the Franciscan Schoolmen to solve the celebrated objection and defend the position that one divine mission can be had without the other were in vain.<sup>27</sup> But in their efforts they described for us the kind of knowledge that is involved in an invisible mission. For

<sup>24</sup> Perhaps the use of the word *percipere* to designate an affective rather than cognitive act was anticipated by William of Auxerre in his *Summa aurea* (1215–29), where he writes of a *gustus spiritualis per modum experientiae*; for this, he says, "non est cognitio Dei sed perceptio quedam." Cf. Cod. Vat. lat. 5981, f. 109r.

<sup>25</sup> Cod. Vat. Barb. lat. 729.

<sup>26</sup> Cod. Vat. Ottob. lat. 294, f. 28r. It may be noted that in several other places (cf. ff. 30r, 33r, 247r) Richard suggests somewhat tentatively that perhaps the just man can have a kind of tenuous vision of God here in this life. This is the opinion, one recalls, which was expressly rejected in the Sentence commentaries of both St. Albert (1, d. 17, a. 6, sol.) and St. Thomas (1, d. 17, q. 1, a. 4, sol.).

<sup>27</sup> St. Bonaventure, it should be noted, was too acute a theologian not to perceive the failure of his fellow friars, and accordingly, in his *Commentary on the Sentences*, he abandoned the whole position, holding that the mission of one divine Person cannot be had without the simultaneous mission of the other. Cf. *In 1 Sent.*, d. 15, p. 2, q. 2.

Alexander of Hales, it is "omnis cognitio quae facit gratum."<sup>28</sup> The anonymous author of Cod. Vat. lat. 691 says it is "quelibet cognitio certa de eternis" when the Son is sent and "cognitio [quae] importat saporem" when the Holy Spirit is sent.<sup>29</sup> Odo Rigaud describes it as either "quelibet revelatio vel cognitio eius quod prius non erat cognitum" or "que importat cognitionem simul et saporem, quod idem est quod sapida scientia."<sup>30</sup> And in the *Summa fratris Alexandri* the knowledge which is associated with the mission of the Son is simply "illuminatio ad cognitionem aeternorum," while that which accompanies a mission of the Holy Spirit is "sapientia secundum nomen suum, scilicet cognitio cum sapore."<sup>31</sup> Some of these phrases will find their way into the writing of St. Thomas. And after we study the precise meaning of this *cognitio cum sapore* in the second part of this historical section<sup>32</sup> we shall readily understand why, and in what sense, St. Thomas translates it so easily into *quasi experimentalis cognitio*.

But for the moment let us return to the more important question raised by Peter of Poitiers. When Augustine wrote, "Et tunc unicuique mittitur cum a quoquam cognoscitur atque percipitur," did he mean to imply that knowledge alone, without grace, was sufficient? This problem was not overlooked by the Franciscan masters. The author

<sup>28</sup> *In 1 Sent.*, d. 15, num. 20: "Respondeo: non sumitur sapientia secundum quod est donum nobilissimum et supremum, sed communiter pro omni cognitione quae facit gratum. Sunt autem in sapientia duo, scilicet cognitio, secundum quam illuminat, et sic respicit Filium; et sapor, et sic respicit Spiritum sanctum."

<sup>29</sup> *In 1 Sent.*, d. 15 (folium 18r): "Sapientia dicitur duobus modis. Aliquando dicitur quelibet cognitio certa de eternis. Aliquando ultra cognitionem importat saporem. Et hoc datur in missione Spiritus sancti; primo modo in missione Filii."

<sup>30</sup> *In 1 Sent.*, d. 15, q. 6 (Cod. Vat. lat. 5982, f. 29r): "Ad primum dicendum quod sapientia potest appellari quelibet revelatio vel cognitio eius quod prius non erat cognitum. Et hoc potest esse per gratiam gratis datam sine gratia gratum faciente. Et hoc non est donum Spiritus sancti, nec necesse est cum ipsa dari. Est etiam [?] sapientia que importat cognitionem simul et saporem, quod idem est quod sapida scientia. Et hoc est donum Spiritus sancti ratione ipsius gustus seu saporis. Et quum hoc datur tunc possunt simul dari seu mitti Filium et Spiritus sanctus, sed differenter tamen. Effectus enim cognitionis pertinet ad Filium; quod vero est ibi gustus seu saporis pertinet ad Spiritum sanctum; et si hoc contingat aliquando, ratione tamen alia et alia dicitur iste mitti et ille, ut dictum est."

<sup>31</sup> *Lib.* 1, no. 506: "Ad tertium potest dici dupliciter: uno modo illuminatio ad cognitionem aeternorum, et sic sapientia mittitur cum Filium mittitur; alio modo dicitur sapientia secundum nomen suum, scilicet cognitio cum sapore, et sic est donum Spiritus sancti."

<sup>32</sup> Cf. infra, pp. 372-73.

of the treatise *De missione* in the Franciscan *Summa* takes it up expressly. As Peter had pointed out that Augustine was speaking of *cognitio devotionis*, which is knowledge coupled with charity, so also does the author of *De missione*, although in different terms. Augustine, he explains, was not thinking of some indefinite kind of knowledge but specifically of knowledge which is joined to love: “. . . non intelligit de cognitione qualicumque, sed de cognitione conjuncta affectioni amoris . . . .”<sup>33</sup>

St. Bonaventure takes a different approach to this same question. In his *Commentary on the Sentences* (1250–55) he explains that knowledge of the Son by means of a gift *gratis data*, such as inform faith, is not sufficient for the Son’s invisible mission, because it is necessary for the soul to know, not only that the Son proceeds from another, but also that He is dwelling in the soul as in His home. The soul need not know this, he adds, with absolute certitude but at least by conjecture. Nor need the soul know it with actual knowledge: habitual knowledge suffices.<sup>34</sup> Therefore, unlike Peter of Poitiers and the author of the tractate *De missione*, who solve this question by distinguishing the kind of knowledge involved in the mission, Bonaventure resolves it by specifying the object of the knowledge as knowledge of the presence of the divine Person in the soul. Hence it is clear why he is quick to add that this knowledge need only be conjectural, since for him as well as for the other writers of the time<sup>35</sup> the just man can only have conjectural knowledge of his state of grace through fallible signs.<sup>36</sup> Moreover, this knowledge need only be habitual, as happens in the case of infants who, thanks to the gifts of *gratia gratum faciens*, have a real potency of knowing and loving the divine Persons present in the soul.<sup>37</sup> This solution of Bonaventure is adopted by Richard

<sup>33</sup> Lib. 1, no. 593: “Unde ratione fidei informis non dicitur mitti, licet per fidem informem possit aliquo modo cognosci processio Filii vel Spiritus sancti, quia Augustinus non intelligit de cognitione qualicumque, sed de cognitione conjuncta affectioni amoris, quae, cum est in homine, dicitur Deus inhabitare, et cum de novo est, dicitur mitti.”

<sup>34</sup> *In 1 Sent.*, d. 15, p. 2, a. un., q. 1, ad 4m: “Ad illud quod ultimo obicitur, quod tunc mitti, quando percipitur, dicendum quod non sufficit cognoscere Filium, quod sit ab alio, immo oportet quod cognoscat, quod sit in ipso ut in suo habitaculo. Hoc autem dico non cognitione necessitatis, sed coniecturae, nec de cognitione actuali, sed de habituali.”

<sup>35</sup> Cf. *infra*, pp. 370 ff.

<sup>36</sup> *In 1 Sent.*, d. 17, p. 1, a. un., q. 3, contra b, and corp.

<sup>37</sup> See Bonaventure’s explanation of this in *1 Sent.*, d. 37, p. 1, dub. 3, and in *4 Sent.*, d. 4, p. 2, a. 2, q. 2. In this he is faithful to his master Alexander; cf. *In 1 Sent.*, d. 37, no. 16.

Rufus of Cornwall, who repeats it verbatim in his *Commentarius Parisiensis* (ca. 1253–56).<sup>38</sup>

In an attempt to explain this same Augustinian text, “Et tunc unicuique mittitur cum a quodam cognoscitur atque percipitur,” St. Albert the Great opens his discussion in his *Commentary on the Sentences* (1243–49) with basically the same difficulty: the divine Persons are sent to souls enriched with grace, not knowledge. In his solution he describes in detail the kind of knowledge that goes with a mission:

Cognitio exigitur ad missionem, ut mihi videtur, sed non omnis, sed triplex, scilicet una quae est ex parte cogniti, scilicet ut sentiam in me donum in quo ut in signo cognoscibilis sit persona missa: signum autem voco id quod habet actum gratiae facientis gratum, et appropriabile est Filio vel Spiritui sancto. Secunda est habitualis cognitio. Tertia est conjecturalis ex signis, sicut si videam spiritum meum esse liberum a vana spe, et vano amore, et caduca tristitia, et timore mundano, et huiusmodi. Et illam triplicem cognitionem puto sufficere secundum habitum ad missionem, et dico non oportere adesse cognitionem secundum actum.<sup>39</sup>

Therefore, for Albert, the just man’s cognition is necessary for the mission, but only a certain kind. To be specific, it has three elements. We should consider his present explanation of the first element in conjunction with an explanation he gave in the preceding distinction:

*In 1 Sent., d. 14, a. 3*

... “mitti est cognosci quod ab alio sit”: et bene concedo, quod hoc fit per effectum, sed non quemlibet: sed duo exiguntur, scilicet appropriabilitas ad proprium et quod sit effectus gratiae gratum facientis, cui conjuncta semper sit processio personarum et persona ipsa: oportet enim ipsam personam cum effectu suo praesentem novo modo monstrari, si debeat dici temporaliter procedere. . . .

*In 1 Sent., d. 15, a. 17*

Cognitio exigitur ad missionem, ut mihi videtur, sed non omnis, sed triplex, scilicet una quae est ex parte cogniti, scilicet ut sentiam in me donum in quo ut in signo cognoscibilis sit persona missa: signum autem voco id quod habet actum gratiae facientis gratum, et appropriabile est Filio vel Spiritui sancto.

Accordingly, this knowledge is on the part of the object known (*ex parte cogniti*): the divine Person must be objectively knowable in a gift as in a sign. This sign must be an effect of *gratia gratum faciens*,

<sup>38</sup> Cod. Vat. lat. 12992.

<sup>39</sup> *In 1 Sent., d. 15, Expositio secundae partis textus.*

and it must be able to be appropriated to the Son or the Holy Spirit. In distinction 14 Albert explains why the gift must pertain to *gratia gratum faciens*: in order that there be a temporal procession, the divine Person must be shown to be present in a new way with the created effect, but only the gifts of *gratia gratum faciens* entail a special communication of the divine Persons to our souls. Furthermore, the effect must be appropriable to the personal properties of the Son or of the Holy Spirit; for the gift does not manifest simply the presence of God in the just soul but the presence of the very Person who is sent. Therefore, the first and fundamental element in our knowledge of the mission is an objective cognoscibility or manifestation<sup>40</sup> of the divine Person in a gift of grace acting as a sign.<sup>41</sup>

The second element in the just man's knowledge of the divine Persons is habitual cognition: *Secunda est habitualis cognitio*. St. Albert seems to take *habitualis cognitio* here as denoting the habits of grace not merely inasmuch as they objectively manifest the divine Persons but inasmuch as they are subjective virtues enabling the just man to know these Persons. For since Albert seems to indicate that only the first cognition refers to an objective manifestation (*una . . . est ex parte cogniti*), one may assume, so it would seem, that the second, *habitualis cognitio*, is *ex parte cognoscentis*.

The third element in the just man's threefold knowledge of the mission is conjectural knowledge (*conjecturalis ex signis*). The just man observes certain facts: he finds himself detached from vain loves, joys, hopes, and so forth, and thence conjectures to the presence of the divine Persons in his soul. This conjecture, of course, falls short of certain, scientific knowledge.<sup>42</sup> However, Albert points out, strictly speaking, no actual knowledge is necessary. Here he is thinking, it would seem, of the case of baptized infants who have the divine Persons sent to dwell in their souls and yet have no actual knowledge of Them.<sup>43</sup>

Thus far we have seen, in its main lines of development, the problem of the just man's knowledge of the invisible mission, prompted as it was by St. Augustine's famous dictum, "Et tunc unicuique mittitur

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, d. 14, a. 1, sol.; a. 2, sol.; a. 3, sol. and ad 3m, etc.

<sup>41</sup> This notion of objective manifestation was emphasized previously by Alexander of Hales in his disputed question *De missionibus divinis* (Cod Vat. lat. 782, ff. 7v-8r).

<sup>42</sup> *In 1 Sent.*, d. 15, a. 17, ad 5m. <sup>43</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, d. 37, a. 15.

cum a quodam cognoscitur atque percipitur." We have witnessed the solutions to this problem offered by the predecessors of St. Thomas. It remains for us to see that Thomas' solution, formulated in terms of experimental knowledge, does not represent a break with this theological tradition but rather takes its harmonious place in it. But first we must pause briefly to learn what precisely *experimentalis cognitio* meant, and how it was used, in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

### *Experimentalis cognitio*

The notion of experimental knowledge was introduced by medieval writers, it would seem, in an effort to solve the controverted question, whether a just man is able to know that he possesses divine charity. As early as 1206-9, Prevostin had argued that the just man can know that he has charity through an *experimentum*.<sup>44</sup> William of Auxerre expanded on this, explaining that the just man can know that he has charity through *scientia experimenti que est per signa*: these signs are the possession of a joy of spirit, the conception of noble desires, and the performance of good works.<sup>45</sup> Hugh of St. Cher, too, in his enormous commentary on Sacred Scripture says that just men can know the charity in their souls with *scientia experientiae sive conjecturae*<sup>46</sup> or *cognitio experientiae quae est per conjecturas*.<sup>47</sup> Such knowledge is acquired by conjecturing from various signs, such as joy in the good fortune of others and sorrow at their misfortune, selflessness, remorse for sin, ease in God's service, and so forth.<sup>48</sup> Roland of Cremona, in the long discussion of the question of the cognoscibility of charity which appears in his *Summa* (ca. 1233), does not use the term "experience," but he does explain lucidly and unequivocally the nature of the just man's knowledge of his charity:

<sup>44</sup> *Summa theologica*, Lib. 2 (Cod. Vat. lat. 1174, f. 48r): "Item Apostolus: *Vultis habere experimentum eius qui*, et cetera. Ergo ipse sciebat Christum loqui in se. Eadem ratione sciebat se habere caritatem."

<sup>45</sup> *Summa aurea* (1215-29) (Cod. Vat. lat. 5981, f. 60r): "Sed sciendum est quod duplex est scientia, scientia experimenti que est per signa, et scientia que est vero nomine scientia, que est cognitio alicuius per se sicut in principis vel que est alicuius per se nota. Primo modo potest aliquis scire se habere caritatem: potest enim aliqua signa habere quod habet caritatem, et illa sunt tria. Primum est jucunditas mentis; secundum, bona desideria; tertium, bona opera. Sed secundo modo nullus scit se habere caritatem nisi per revelationem."

<sup>46</sup> *In Rom.* 8, 16 (Tomus 7, f. 48r).    <sup>47</sup> *In 2 Cor.* 13, 5 (Tomus 7, f. 145v).    <sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

he can taste the sweet effects of charity in his *affectus* and from these as well as from other signs he reasons syllogistically to the probable presence of charity in his soul.<sup>49</sup>

But it is only among the Franciscans, particularly in the searching questions of John of La Rochelle, that one finds a thoroughgoing and lucid explanation of the nature and meaning of experimental knowledge. John's master, Alexander of Hales, had preserved the traditional teaching of the doctors before him. In his *Commentary on the Sentences* he repeats that charity can be experienced by a fallible experiment (*experiri . . . experimento fallibili*), since the sweetness of love can be sensed in our works;<sup>50</sup> moreover, he notes, our knowledge of our charity is joined to feeling (*est cum affectu*).<sup>51</sup> However, it is not Alexander but his disciple, John of La Rochelle, who gathers together these ideas and gives us in three extensive and penetrating articles<sup>52</sup> a precise and scientific definition of experimental knowledge. First of all, experimental knowledge (*scientia experimentalis*) is sharply distinguished from speculative knowledge (*scientia speculativa*), which is certain, scientific knowledge acquired through an infallible medium like the cause or certain effect. Experimental knowledge, on the other hand, is defined as cognition acquired through a fallible medium, that is to say, through fallible signs which constitute for the just man an *experimentum fallax*. Thus, he points out, if a man experiences a certain peace and gladness in his soul, which are effects of grace, he can conclude, but not with certitude, that this peace and joy are indeed effects of grace. Moreover, experimental knowledge is also described by John of La Rochelle as affective knowledge (*scientia affectiva*), since it derives from an affective experience of love or delight or taste: ". . . scientia affectiva . . . enim est per experientiam rei in affectu; . . . res gratie facit se notum in affectu sicut dulcedo in gustu."<sup>53</sup> Accordingly, we see that the just man's knowledge of grace

<sup>49</sup> Cod. Vat. Barb. lat. 729, f. 419: ". . . per signa et per effectus . . . sillogicitur probabiliter caritatem esse in homine . . ."

<sup>50</sup> *In 1 Sent.*, d. 17, no. 6.      <sup>51</sup> *In 3 Sent.*, d. 23, no. 6.

<sup>52</sup> *Quaestiones theologicæ de cognitione gratie*, a. 8, 9, 10 (Cod. Vat. lat. 782, ff. 143r-44r). These articles have been incorporated in the *Summa fratris Alexandri*, lib. 3 (tom. 4) nos. 640 ff., without substantial change.

<sup>53</sup> Of course, we can never be certain that what we experience or feel in our *affectus* is a genuine effect of supernatural charity: it always remains possible, John tells us, that what we experience is counterfeit, deriving from some other cause than grace.

and infused charity is called experimental by John of La Rochelle for two closely associated but distinct reasons: it originates in an affective experience and is arrived at by means of a fallible *experimentum*, by concluding, that is, from fallible signs.

The distinction drawn by John of La Rochelle between speculative and affective or experimental knowledge finds its way into the anonymous commentary of Codex Vaticanus latinus 691; but here the affective knowledge is called practical (*practica*) rather than affective or experimental. The terminology here is borrowed from Alexander<sup>54</sup> but the sense is the same as in John of La Rochelle; for practical knowledge is affective knowledge, i.e., knowledge that is joined to love: "habet amorem secum annexum."<sup>55</sup> Similarly, the redactor of the *Summa fratris Alexandri*, in addition to incorporating the questions of John of La Rochelle into his work,<sup>56</sup> also employs this distinction in another place: a man who believes revealed truths with faith informed by charity, the author tells us, does so not merely with the kind of certitude that comes from intellectual speculation (*certitudo speculationis intellectus*) but with the kind that is rooted in an affective experience (*certitudo experientiae ex parte affectus*).<sup>57</sup> Finally, in this connection, St. Bonaventure merely repeats that the just man can have *cognitio experientiae* of his charity and that he has this *per conjecturas*, that is, from fallible signs such as the mortification of his concupiscences and his vain and worldly affections, a lack of remorse, and so on.<sup>58</sup>

The notion of experimental knowledge was also put to use by medieval theologians in their discussions of the gift of wisdom. The reason for this is easy to understand, since wisdom was conceived of not as sheer knowledge but as knowledge that is coupled with love and taste. That wisdom is more than mere cognition of God was pointed out by Peter Lombard, who observed that it included love and delectation,<sup>59</sup> and by Peter of Poitiers, who recognized that wisdom, etymologically speaking, derives its name from the word for

<sup>54</sup> *In 1 Sent.*, d. 17, no. 6.

<sup>55</sup> Cod. Vat. lat. 691, f. 5r.

<sup>56</sup> Lib. 3, nos. 640 ff.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.* (tom. 4) no. 695.

<sup>58</sup> *In 1 Sent.*, d. 17, p. 1, qq. 3 and 4. Cf. also *In 3 Sent.*, d. 23, dub. 4. Richard Rufus of Cornwall repeats the doctrine of Bonaventure in his *Commentarius Parisiensis* (Cod. Vat. lat. 12993, f. 48r).

<sup>59</sup> *Sent.*, lib. 3, d. 35.



taste (*sapor*) rather than from the verb to know (*sapere*).<sup>60</sup> These ideas were picked up by William of Auxerre, who explained in his *Summa aurea* that wisdom is knowledge of God through a certain effect of His, namely, the *delectatio* or delight which one has in Him through charity and understanding;<sup>61</sup> as a matter of fact, he tells us, the proper operation of wisdom is not knowledge of God but an immediate perception or savoring of the sweetness of God: and this is spiritual taste, a kind of experience.<sup>62</sup> William of Paris (d. 1249), following this same line, explained that spiritual taste (*gustus spiritualis*) is not apprehensive or intellectual but motive or affective.<sup>63</sup> By taste (*sapor*) is meant the affections of the soul or, in an objective sense, those qualities of an object from which affections arise.<sup>64</sup> In other words, a man knows God's goodness; this knowledge stimulates the *affectus* to love and delectation, that is, to taste. Such knowledge, therefore, is *sapida*, savorous, inasmuch as it generates *saporem affectionis* or inasmuch as it proceeds from a consideration of those qualities of an object which give rise to affective movements in the soul.<sup>65</sup> Hugh of St. Cher, too, was clear on this point: wisdom gives a taste of God, and this taste is an act of the affective part of the soul.<sup>66</sup>

We have already seen above<sup>67</sup> how this tradition was preserved among the Franciscans, who also described the created wisdom that accompanies a divine mission as *cognitio cum sapore*. In line with this tradition St. Bonaventure explained that wisdom is affective or loving knowledge, that is to say, knowledge (*lumen cognitionis*) that is coupled with the affection of spiritual taste (*sapor affectionis*).<sup>68</sup> Hence it is that wisdom, whose principal act is the affective act of *sapor*, is knowledge which is experiential of goodness and sweetness (*experimentalis boni et dulcis*).<sup>69</sup> Wisdom, therefore, in its most proper

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, cap. 17.      <sup>61</sup> Cod. Vat. lat. 5981, f. 91v.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, f. 109r: "... sapientia proprie loquendo non est cognitio Dei sed perceptio quedam, gustus spiritualis per modum experientie. Deus enim ipse facit et in palato anime dulcedinem quam saporat sapientia sicut ipsum mel in gustu materiali. Est ergo sapientia perceptio sive saporatio quedam dulcedinis Dei immediata."

<sup>63</sup> *De virtutibus*, in *Operum summa*, f. lxxiii, col. 4.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, f. lxxiii, col. 3.      <sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, f. lxxiii, col. 1.

<sup>66</sup> Cod. Vat. lat. 1098, f. 120r: "... sapientia [est] donum quo gustus, id est affectus anime, disponitur ad gustandum Deum."

<sup>67</sup> Cf. supra, p. 371.      <sup>68</sup> *In 3 Sent.*, d. 35, a. un., q. 1, ad 4m.      <sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, q. 1, resp.

sense, is defined by Bonaventure as *cognitio Dei experimentalis*.<sup>70</sup>

The same doctrine, it may be noted, was received by St. Albert: *cognitio experimentalis* is had thanks to the affective powers of spiritual taste and feeling.<sup>71</sup> That is why wisdom differs from faith, Albert says; for faith merely sees, whereas wisdom tastes and experiences the things of God (*gustantur divina per experimentum*).<sup>72</sup>

Thus we see that medieval writers preceding St. Thomas used the term "experimental knowledge" to designate the kind of knowledge which is coupled with an affective experience of love and spiritual taste. Experiential knowledge was conceived of as knowledge that is joined to charity and to the affective experiences that go with charity. Moreover, as some of them pointed out, these affective experiences can form the basis for a conjectural knowledge of the possession of charity: the just man can reason from these experiences (as well as from other signs) to the probable presence of charity in his soul.

Furthermore, not one of these writers gives us the slightest cause for believing that he is thinking of experimental knowledge as involving an *intellectual* experience of God. There is no evidence at all that they understood experimental knowledge to be experimental qua knowledge. What is more, we have found nothing up to this point to suggest that our knowledge of the divine Persons sent to us in an invisible mission, or our knowledge of God through wisdom, is anything more than ordinary knowledge which is accompanied by the love and taste brought by charity. It is plain for us to see, therefore, that theories of immediate suprainentional or mediate supradiscursive cognition of the divine Persons were the products of later minds. It remains only for us to ask: Was either of these theories produced by the mind of St. Thomas?

#### ST. THOMAS AQUINAS

##### *Experimental Knowledge of the Divine Persons*

St. Thomas' first reference to an experimental knowledge of the divine Persons is found in the *Scriptum* (1254-56) in connection with St. Augustine's familiar text, "mitti est cognosci quod ab alio sit."

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>71</sup> *In 3 Sent.*, d. 13, a. 4, ad obj. Cf. also *ibid.*, d. 27, a. 4, Ad diffin. Apostoli, ad 2m.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, d. 35, a. 1, Ad diffin. 1, ad 1m.

Peter of Poitiers, the reader will recall, first pointed up the problem suggested by this text: if *mitti est cognosci*, then a man without *gratia gratum faciens* can have an invisible mission of the Holy Spirit, thanks to inform faith. St. Thomas, too, considers this problem. Compare his solution with the answers that had already been given to this question:

*Peter of Poitiers*

Quod ergo dicit Augustinus tunc mitti Filium cum cuiusquam mente cognoscitur, intelligendum est de cognitione devotionis. Licet enim aliquis cognitionem habeat modo de Filio, etsi prius non haberet illam, non ideo dicitur ei mitti, nisi caritatem habeat.<sup>73</sup>

*St. Bonaventure*

Ad aliud quod ultimo obicitur, quod tunc mittitur, quando percipitur, dicendum quod non sufficit cognoscere Filium, quod sit ab alio, immo oportet quod cognoscat, quod sit in ipso ut in suo habitaculo. Hoc autem dico non cognitione necessitatis, sed conjecturae nec de cognitione actuali, sed de habituali.<sup>75</sup>

*Summa fratris Alexandri*

Unde ratione fidei informis non dicitur mitti, . . . quia Augustinus non intellegit de cognitione qualicumque, sed de cognitione conjuncta affectioni amoris, quae cum est in homine, dicitur Deus inhabitare. . . .<sup>74</sup>

*St. Thomas Aquinas*

Ad tertium dicendum, quod non qualicumque cognitio sufficit ad rationem missionis, sed solum illa quae accipitur ex aliquo dono appropriato personae, per quod efficitur in nobis conjunctio ad Deum, secundum modum proprium illius personae, scilicet per amorem, quando Spiritus sanctus datur. Unde cognitio ista est quasi experimentalis.<sup>76</sup>

Now it is easy to see that there is no close verbal resemblance among these four responses. But it is also easy to see that the first two contain substantially the same solution: the knowledge that comes from inform faith is insufficient; for when St. Augustine wrote *mitti est cognosci*, he was thinking, not of sheer knowledge, but of knowledge that is coupled with supernatural love. St. Bonaventure, on the other hand, takes a different and somewhat simpler approach; for whereas Peter of Poitiers and the redactor of the *Summa fratris Alexandri* responded by specifying the knowledge as knowledge that is joined to charity (*cognitio devotionis* and *cognitio conjuncta affectioni amoris*), St. Bonaventure solves the difficulty by specifying the object of the

<sup>73</sup> *Sent.*, lib. 1, cap. 36.

<sup>75</sup> *In 1 Sent.*, d. 15, p. 2, q. 1, ad 4m.

<sup>74</sup> Lib. 1, no. 503.

<sup>76</sup> *In 1 Sent.*, d. 14, q. 2, a. 2. ad 4m.

knowledge: inform faith, he tells us, is not sufficient, because it does not apprise a man of a divine Person dwelling in his soul. Now, it will be observed, St. Thomas, like Peter of Poitiers and the redactor of the Franciscan *Summa*, solves the difficulty by determining the kind of knowledge required for the invisible mission. But, it seems, in formulating his answer he was less dependent on either Peter or the unknown redactor than on the following passage taken from the Sentence commentary of his master, St. Albert the Great:

*St. Albert the Great*

... "mitti est cognosci quod ab alio sit": et bene concedo, quod hoc fit per effectum, sed non quemlibet, sed duo exiguntur, scilicet appropriabilitas ad proprium et quod sit effectus gratiae gratum facientis, cui conjuncta semper sit processio personae et persona ipsa.<sup>77</sup>

*St. Thomas Aquinas*

Ad tertium dicendum, quod non qualiscumque cognitio sufficit ad rationem missionis, sed solum illa quae accipitur ex aliquo dono appropriato personae, per quod efficitur in nobis conjunctio ad Deum, secundum modum proprium illius personae, scilicet per amorem, quando Spiritus sanctus datur. Unde cognitio ista est quasi experimentalis.<sup>78</sup>

St. Albert explained that when St. Augustine wrote "mitti est cognosci quod ab alio sit," he meant that the Person sent is known by an effect which (1) is appropriable to the Person, and (2) is an effect of *gratia gratum faciens*, which always entails the presence of that Person. St. Thomas put the same requirements: the knowledge necessary for the mission is had from a gift of God which (1) is appropriable to a particular Person, and (2) is a link joining the soul to God according to the proper mode of the Person and so entails His presence; thus, for instance, (1) from a knowledge of his charity which is appropriated to the Holy Spirit a man knows the Holy Spirit, and (2) through this charity he is joined to God, or rather, by appropriation, to the Person of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, St. Thomas observes, this knowledge is quasi-experimental: *Unde cognitio ista est quasi experimentalis*.

Wherefore is it quasi-experimental? Surely St. Thomas does not draw this conclusion from the first fact—that it is taken from a gift which is appropriated to the divine Person—but rather from the second—that it is a gift which joins the soul to God, or more precisely, as St. Albert puts it, that it is a gift which is *gratum faciens*. In other

<sup>77</sup> *In 1 Sent.*, d. 14, a. 3, sol.

<sup>78</sup> *In 1 Sent.*, d. 14, q. 2, a. 2 ad 3m.

words, in refuting the objection drawn from the words of St. Augustine, St. Thomas insists that inform faith is not adequate for an invisible mission: sheer knowledge is not enough; a man must have the knowledge which is accompanied by *gratia gratum faciens*. Thus, as Peter of Poitiers said that the knowledge of the mission must be *cognitio devotionis*, as the Franciscan *Summa* described it as *non cognitio qualiscumque sed cognitio conjuncta affectioni amoris*, so St. Thomas, in the same sense, wrote that it is *non qualiscumque cognitio . . . sed . . . quasi experimentalis*.<sup>79</sup> That St. Thomas attaches this meaning to the term *quasi experimentalis cognitio* comes to us as no surprise, since, as we have seen, *experimentalis cognitio* meant for the theologians of the time precisely this: knowledge that is accompanied by charity and spiritual taste.

Again, at the end of distinction 15, St. Thomas glosses the fundamental text written by St. Augustine and repeated by Peter Lombard: "Et tunc unicuique mittitur cum a quoquam cognoscitur atque percipitur quantum cognosci et percipi potest pro captu vel proficientis in Deum, vel perfectae in Deo animae rationalis." Compare St. Thomas' gloss with that of the earlier Dominican master at Paris, Hugh of St. Cher:

*Hugh of St. Cher*

. . . *percipiatur affectu; ac cognoscatur intellectu; . . . vel proficientis in via; vel perfecte in patria; vel utrumque in via: perfecte quantum ad contemplantes, proficientis quantum ad activos.*<sup>80</sup>

*St. Thomas Aquinas*

"Et tunc unicuique mittitur, cum a quodam cognoscitur." Hoc intelligendum est non tantum de cognitione speculativa, sed quae est etiam quodammodo experimentalis; quod ostendit hoc quod sequitur: "Atque percipitur," quod proprie experientiam in dono percepto demonstrat. Dicitur autem anima rationalis in Deum proficiens quantum in statu viae, perfecta in Deo quantum ad statum patriae, ubi utraque missio complebitur propter perfectam cognitionem et perfectum amorem.<sup>81</sup>

<sup>79</sup> To a similar objection, viz., that inform faith is sufficient for wisdom, St. Albert responded along the same lines: ". . . non sufficit sapientiae cognitio Dei in similitudine, nisi adsit et gustus . . ." (*In 3 Sent.*, d. 35, a. 1, Ad diffin. 1, ad 3m).

<sup>80</sup> *In 1 Sent.*, d. 17 (Cod. Vat. lat. 1098, f. 16r).

<sup>81</sup> *In 1 Sent.*, d. 15, *Expositio secundae partis textus*.

St. Thomas tells us that the knowledge referred to in the text of St. Augustine is not merely speculative but, in a certain sense, experimental; as evidence for his assertion he points to the verb *percipitur*, which, he says, properly designates an experience in the gift received (*experientiam in dono percepto*). By this it seems that St. Thomas means an affective experience of love and spiritual taste. For *percipere* in this celebrated text of St. Augustine already was explained by Hugh of St. Cher and others<sup>82</sup> as designating an act of the *affectus*. In this historical context it is easy to understand St. Thomas' argument: the knowledge of the divine Person sent to the soul is experimental because, as evidenced by the verb *percipere*, it is not sheer cognition but is accompanied by an act of the affective part of the soul. Accordingly, it seems fair to conclude that by *experientia in dono percepto* St. Thomas meant to signify the same affective experience that his master, St. Albert, described in similar terms as *experimentum dulcedinis Dei in suis donis*<sup>83</sup> and *gustus dulcedinis cogniti in dono sanctitatis percepto a Deo*,<sup>84</sup> and, therefore, by *cognitio quodammodo experimentalis* he meant to signify knowledge which is accompanied by an affective experience of this sort.

There are two other places in the *Scriptum* where St. Thomas describes the knowledge involved in the mission as experimental; but these passages need not delay us, since from them alone nothing decisive can be concluded.<sup>85</sup> There is, however, an important passage in the *Prima pars* of the *Summa theologiae* (1266-68).

In an article concerning the invisible mission of the Son of God, St. Thomas repeats an objection which he already had considered in his *Scriptum*: the invisible mission of a divine Person takes place only according to gifts which are *gratum facientia*; the gifts of the intellect, however, according to which the Son proceeds, are not *gratum facientia*; therefore, the Son is not sent on an invisible mission.<sup>86</sup> The answer, of course, is that the Son proceeds as the Word spirating Love; therefore, the Son is sent according to a gift of the intellect which bursts into love. And accordingly, St. Thomas points out, St.

<sup>82</sup> E.g., William of Auxerre and Richard Fishacre.

<sup>83</sup> *In 3 Sent.*, d. 35, a. 1, Ad diffin. 1, ad 5m.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, d. 35, a. 1, Ad diffin. 2, ad 2m.

<sup>85</sup> Cf. *In 1 Sent.*, d. 15, q. 2, ad 5m; and *ibid.*, d. 16, q. 1, a. 2, sol.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, d. 15, q. 4, a. 1, obj. 2: *Sum. theol.* 1, q. 43, a. 5, obj. 2.

Augustine says that the Son is sent when He is known and perceived by someone; for perception indicates a certain experimental knowledge and this, he adds, is properly called wisdom, which includes tasting and relish. Now, compare this response, given in the *Summa*, with the one St. Thomas gave in the *Scriptum*:

*Scriptum super lib. Sent.*

Constat autem quod in processione Verbi aeterni est cognitio perfecta secundum omnem modum, et ideo ex tali notitia procedit amor. Unde dicit Augustinus, III de Trin., cap. 10: "Verbum quod insinuare intendimus cum amore notitia est." Quodcumque ergo habetur cognitio ex qua non sequitur amor gratuitus, non habetur similitudo Verbi sed aliquid illius. Sed solum tunc habetur cognitio talis ex qua procedit amor, qui conjungit ipsi cognito secundum rationem convenientis.<sup>87</sup>

*Summa theologiae*

Filius autem est Verbum non qualecumque, sed spirans Amorem: unde Augustinus dicit, in IX libro De Trin.: Verbum quod insinuare intendimus, cum amore notitia est. Non igitur secundum quamlibet perfectionem intellectus mittitur Filius: sed secundum talem instructionem intellectus, qua prorumpat in affectum amoris, ut dicitur Joan. 6: Omnis qui audivit a Patre, et didicit, venit ad me; et in Psalmo: In meditatione mea exardescet ignis. Et ideo signanter dicit Augustinus quod Filius mittitur, cum a quoquam cognoscitur atque percipitur: perceptio enim experimentalem quandam notitiam significat. Et haec proprie dicitur sapientia, quasi sapida scientia, secundum illud Eccl. 6: Sapientia secundum nomen eius est.<sup>88</sup>

Accordingly, in both responses St. Thomas explains that the just man's knowledge of the Son sent to inhabit his soul is knowledge which bursts into or is followed by supernatural love (*prorumpat in affectum amoris, sequitur amor gratuitus*). But to the response in the *Summa* St. Thomas adds the observation that he made before in a similar context in the *Scriptum*: this knowledge, he says, is followed by love, and *therefore* (*Et ideo*) St. Augustine expressly pointed out that the Son is sent when He is both known and perceived, for "perception" shows that the knowledge is experimental. In other words, what Thomas says is this: the knowledge of the Son is followed by the love of charity, and for this reason it is called experimental knowledge; for St. Augustine indicated this when he said that the Son is sent, not

<sup>87</sup> *In 1 Sent.*, d. 15, q. 4, a. 1, ad 3m.

<sup>88</sup> *Sum. theol.* 1, q. 43, a. 5, ad 2m.

simply when He is known, but when He is known and perceived; for the word "perception" designates an act of the *affectus*.<sup>89</sup>

Furthermore, St. Thomas also points out in this passage that experimental knowledge is properly called wisdom, since it joins knowledge to a kind of taste. This remark is quite in line with his understanding of wisdom; for, according to Thomas, proper to wisdom is not merely speculative but affective knowledge, that is, knowledge which leads to love:

Duplex est cognitio veritatis: una quidem quae habetur per gratiam; alia vero quae habetur per naturam. Et ista quae habetur per gratiam est duplex: una quae est speculativa tantum, sicut cum alicui aliqua secreta divinorum revelantur; alia vero quae est affectiva, producens amorem Dei; et haec proprie pertinet ad donum Sapientiae.<sup>90</sup>

Accordingly, from this passage and from the passage quoted above one might well reason: the experimental knowledge of the mission is the proper knowledge of wisdom;<sup>91</sup> but the proper knowledge of wisdom is affective knowledge;<sup>92</sup> therefore, experimental knowledge is affective knowledge, that is, knowledge which leads to love (*producens amorem Dei*). As a matter of fact, St. Thomas himself in another place expressly identifies these two terms, "affective" and "experimental," as synonymous.<sup>93</sup>

In the *Secunda secundae* St. Thomas explains that wisdom is essentially an intellectual gift whose act is right judgment, but that it has its cause, which is charity, in the will. For this gift enables the just man to judge God and creatures for what they truly are from God's standpoint. This right estimation is derived from a certain connaturality or union with the things of God which is effected by charity;<sup>94</sup> for charity conveys taste (*sapor*), consisting in an affective experience of spiritual delectations. This is brought out sharply in

<sup>89</sup> Cf. supra, p. 378.

<sup>90</sup> *Sum. theol.* 1, q. 64, a. 1, c.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, q. 43, a. 5, ad 2m.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, q. 64, a. 1, c.

<sup>93</sup> *Sum. theol.* 2-2, q. 97, a. 2, ad 2m: "Duplex est cognitio divinae bonitatis vel voluntatis. Una quidem speculativa . . . Alia autem est cognitio divinae bonitatis seu voluntatis affectiva seu experimentalis, dum quis experitur in seipso gustum divinae dulcedinis et complacentiam divinae bonitatis: sicut de Hierotheo dicit Dionysius . . . quod didicit divina ex compassione ad ipsa."

<sup>94</sup> *Sum. theol.* 2-2, q. 45, a. 2, c.: "Sapientia quae est donum Spiritus sancti, sicut dictum est, facit rectitudinem iudicii circa res divinas, vel per regulas divinas de aliis, ex quadam connaturalitate sive unione ad divina. Quae quidem est per caritatem, ut dictum est."



St. Thomas' response to the following objection: "Praeterea, Eccli. 6 dicitur: *Sapientia doctrinae secundum nomen eius est. Dicitur autem sapientia quasi sapida scientia: quod videtur ad affectum pertinere, ad quem pertinet experiri spirituales delectationes seu dulcedines. Ergo sapientia non est in intellectu, sed magis in affectu.*"<sup>96</sup> This conclusion is rejected by St. Thomas for the following reason: "... loquitur de sapientia quantum ad suam causam. Ex qua etiam sumitur nomen sapientiae, secundum quod *saporem* quendam importat."<sup>96</sup> Its cause, of course, is charity.<sup>97</sup> Hence, it is charity that joins taste to the knowledge of wisdom, adding to knowledge an affective experience of spiritual sweetness and delectation.

Therefore, the just man judges from a connaturality or union with the things of God which is effected by charity and spiritual taste; from this taste he is enabled to form a right estimation of God and creatures. Like Hierotheus, he learns divine things by experiencing them. Now, it is interesting to note that in his *De veritate* St. Thomas explicitly stated that Hierotheus' experience of divine things was an affective act: "... passio illa de qua loquitur Dionysius, nihil aliud est quam affectio ad divina, quae habet magis rationem passionis quam simplex apprehensio. . . ."<sup>98</sup> Hence it is that the just man's knowledge of the goodness of God is said to be affective or experimental knowledge, because it is joined to an affective experience of love and spiritual taste.

### *Experimental Knowledge of Charity*

In his commentary on the *Sentences* St. Thomas teaches that no one can tell for sure that he has charity except through divine revelation; but one can conjecture to it from probable signs. The best of these signs is the absence of remorse, but even this is not a certain

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, q. 45, a. 2, obj. 2.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, q. 45, a. 2, ad 2m. This same objection was answered in the *Scriptum* by St. Thomas in the same way: "Ad primum ergo dicendum quod saporem sapientia importat quantum ad dilectionem praecedentem, non quantum ad cognitionem sequentem, nisi ratione delectationis quae ipsam cognitionem in actu exequitur" (*In 3 Sent.*, d. 35, q. 2, a. 1, q1a. 3, ad 3m).

<sup>97</sup> *Sum. theol.* 2, q. 45, a. 2, sol.: "Sic igitur sapientia quae est donum causam quidem habet in voluntate, scilicet caritatem: sed essentiam habet in intellectu, cuius actus est recte iudicare. . . ."

<sup>98</sup> *De verit.*, q. 26, a. 3, ad 18m.

sign.<sup>99</sup> Thus, charity, whether created or uncreated, is known by us only through its effects.<sup>100</sup> In his disputed question *De veritate* Thomas repeats this same doctrine: without a divine revelation no man can know for certain that he has charity; he can only conjecture from probable signs, for instance, a readiness to perform spiritual works, an efficacious hatred of evil, and the delectation caused by charity in its acts.<sup>101</sup> Similarly, in his commentary on St. Paul's second epistle to the Corinthians, St. Thomas writes that no one knows for certain that he is in Christ; he can only have experiments and signs (*quaedam experimenta et signa*) inasmuch as he feels himself disposed and united in Christ so that in no wise, not even through fear of death, would he permit himself to be separated from Him.<sup>102</sup>

The same doctrine is found in the *Summa*. Without a special revelation the just man cannot know with certainty that he possesses charity. He can, however, know that he has grace conjecturally through signs:

Tertio modo cognoscitur aliquid conjecturaliter per aliqua signa. Et hoc modo aliquis cognoscere potest se habere gratiam: in quantum scilicet percipit se delectari in Deo et contemnere res mundanas; et in quantum homo non est conscius sibi alicuius peccati mortalis. Secundum quem modum potest intelligi quod habetur Apoc. 2: Vincenti dabo manna absconditum, quod nemo novit nisi qui accipit: quia scilicet ille qui accipit, per quandam experientiam dulcedinis novit, quam non experitur ille qui non accipit. Ista autem cognitio imperfecta est. Unde Apostolus dicit, I ad Cor. 4: Nihil mihi conscius sum, sed non in hoc justificatus sum. Quia ut dicitur in Psalmo 18: Delicta quis intelligit? Ab occultis meis munda me, Domine.<sup>103</sup>

Therefore, those who have received grace know it through a kind of experience of its sweetness, and this becomes for them a sign from which they can obtain imperfect (i.e., uncertain and inconclusive) knowledge of their grace. It is easy to recognize here the traditional doctrine which was formulated so precisely by John of La Rochelle and repeated by the great theologians after him. The just man perceives in his soul certain affective experiences (*delectari in Deo, experientia*

<sup>99</sup> *In 1 Sent.*, d. 17, q. 1, a. 4m. Cf. also *In 1 Sent.*, d. 17, *Expositio primae partis textus*; *In 3 Sent.*, d. 23, q. 1, a. 2, ad 1m; *In 4 Sent.*, d. 20, *Expositio textus*.

<sup>100</sup> *In 1 Sent.*, d. 17, q. 1, a. 4, ad 5m.

<sup>101</sup> *De verit.*, q. 10, a. 10, sol. and ad 2m.

<sup>102</sup> *In 2 Cor.*, c. 12, lect. 1, v. 2. Cf. also c. 13, lect. 2, v. 5, where Thomas repeats this same statement: here, however, instead of *per quaedam experimenta et signa*, he writes *per quamdam conjecturam*.

<sup>103</sup> *Sum. theol.* 1-2, q. 112, a. 5.

*dulcedinis*) which are probable signs from which he can conjecture to the presence of grace and of God in his soul. Moreover, it is important to note that like William of Auxerre, Hugh of St. Cher, John of La Rochelle, and so many others, St. Thomas calls our knowledge of our charity experimental, not only when it is conjectured from such an affective experience, but also when it is inferred from any probable sign, that is to say, whenever it is obtained by means of an *experimentum*, which is a test or proof.<sup>104</sup> Thus, in this same article, to the objection that Abraham knew that he had a holy fear and hence grace, St. Thomas replies that Abraham knew that he had grace either by a special revelation from God or else experimentally in his deed, that is, through the test he underwent to prove his love and fear of God.<sup>105</sup>

### *Why Quasi-experimental?*

When St. Thomas said that the just man has experimental knowledge of the divine Persons, he meant that the just man has, not merely the sheer knowledge that goes with inform faith, but the affective and savorous knowledge that comes from wisdom; for by experimental knowledge he meant knowledge that is joined to love and *sapor*. With this in mind we are now in a position to try to resolve through historical evidence the following question: In what sense does St. Thomas restrict the adjective "experimental"? Why does he call it *quasi experimentalis*, *quodammodo experimentalis*, *experimentalem quandam notitiam*, and not simply *experimentalis cognitio*?<sup>106</sup> Various interpretations of the significance of this qualification have been suggested. One is that by the prefix *quasi* St. Thomas meant to dis-

<sup>104</sup> This is the proper meaning of the Latin word *experimentum*, which is derived from *peiraomai*, "to try, to test" (cf. Forcellini, *Lexicon totius latinitatis*). And in this sense it is often used by St. Thomas. See, for example, *In 2 Sent.*, d. 21, q. 1, a. 1, sol.; *In 2 Sent.*, d. 21, q. 1, a. 1, ad 2m; *In 4 Sent.*, d. 9, a. 5, q. 2, obj. 2 and ad 2m; *In 4 Sent.*, d. 34, q. 1, a. 1; *Sum. theol.* 1, q. 114, a. 2, c.; *ibid.* 2-2, q. 10, a. 1, c.; *ibid.*, q. 97, a. 1, c.; *ibid.*, q. 189, a. 4, ad 3m; *In 1 Thess.*, c. 3, lect. 1; *In 1 Heb.*, c. 3, lect. 2; *In ps. Dav.* 25, etc.

<sup>105</sup> *Sum. theol.* 1-2, q. 112, a. 5, ad 5m.

<sup>106</sup> St. Thomas does not always put such a qualification on our experimental knowledge of the indwelling Persons (e.g., *In 1 Sent.*, d. 15, q. 2, ad 5m; *ibid.*, d. 16, q. 1, a. 2, sol.) but in several places he does (*In 1 Sent.*, d. 14, q. 2, a. 2, ad 3m; *ibid.*, q. 15, *Expositio secundae partis textus*; *Sum. theol.* 1, q. 43, a. 5, ad 2m). Hence, unless this qualification is expressly denied, it seems that it should be understood in those places where St. Thomas speaks in a more abbreviated way.

tinguish our experimental knowledge of the divine Persons from the intuitive knowledge that the blessed enjoy in Heaven.<sup>107</sup> But this reason seems unlikely, since St. Thomas never describes the intuitive knowledge of the blessed as *experimentalis* but as *visio Dei per essentiam*.<sup>108</sup> Another interpretation offered is that by these qualifications St. Thomas meant to distinguish our quasi-experimental knowledge from the extraordinary and certain experience that goes with strictly mystical conditions.<sup>109</sup> But that this is what St. Thomas intended to point out by *quasi* seems to be based not on historical evidence but merely on a conjecture. Finally, it has been suggested that by *quasi* St. Thomas wanted to indicate that our knowledge of the divine Persons is not immediate but discursive.<sup>110</sup> But again, this is but a conjecture based more on the theory of discursive knowledge than on textual evidence showing that this is what St. Thomas had in mind when he used the modifying *quasi*.

What, then, did he have in mind? To our knowledge, St. Thomas was the first to use such restrictive expressions as *quasi*, *quodammodo*, and *quaedam* in connection with the just man's experimental knowledge of God. His contemporaries and immediate predecessors, as we have seen, spoke of this knowledge which is accompanied by *sapor* as experimental but never as quasi-experimental.<sup>111</sup> St. Thomas, however, was more precise. For *experientia* in its proper sense signifies for Thomas an act of the senses, and from this it is transferred to designate an act of the intellect.<sup>112</sup> But St. Thomas also takes *experientia* in a

<sup>107</sup> Gardeil, "L'Expérience mystique," p. [74]; Garrigou-Lagrange, "L'Habitation," p. 470.

<sup>108</sup> See, for example, *Sum. theol.* 1, q. 12.

<sup>109</sup> G. Philips, *art. cit.* (supra n. 10) p. 186; Garrigou-Lagrange, "L'Habitation," pp. 470-72.

<sup>110</sup> Fitzgerald, *op. cit.* (supra n. 17) p. 71.

<sup>111</sup> However, William of Auxerre and Albert the Great make use of similar qualifications when speaking of spiritual taste. For instance, William writes: "... sapientia proprie loquendo non est cognitio Dei sed perceptio quedam, gustus spiritualis per modum experientie . . . Est ergo sapientia perceptio sive saporatio quedam dulcedinis Dei immediata" (Cod. Vat. lat. 5981, f. 109r). Similarly, Albert writes: "... est refectio quasi per saporem et odorem . . . et haec est altissimi doni, scilicet sapientiae . . ." (*In 3 Sent.*, d. 35, a. 1, Ad diffin. 3, ad 1m).

<sup>112</sup> *De malo*, q. 16, a. 1, ad 2m: "Ad secundum dicendum, quod experientia proprie ad sensum pertinet. Quamvis enim intellectus non solum cognoscat formas separatas, ut Platonici posuerunt (ex Plat. *in Tim*), sed etiam corpora, non tamen intellectus cognoscit ea prout sunt hic et nunc, quod est proprie experiri; sed secundum rationem communem.

qualified sense (*experientiam quandam*) to stand for an affective experience, an act of the appetite delighting in its object: "Et quia actus appetitivae virtutis est quaedam inclinatio ad rem ipsam, secundum quamdam similitudinem ipsa applicatio appetitivae virtutis ad rem, secundum quod ei inhaeret, accipit nomen sensus, quasi experientiam quamdam sumens de re cui inhaeret, in quantum complaceat sibi in ea."<sup>118</sup> Thus, St. Thomas qualifies the affective experience: he does not call it simply *experientiam* but *experientiam quandam*, since it is experience in an analogous sense (*secundum quamdam similitudinem*), not in the proper sense in which it is used to refer to an act of sense cognition, nor in the sense in which it is commonly transferred to designate an act of the intellect. Accordingly, what historical evidence we have for the meaning of the qualifications which St. Thomas puts on our experimental knowledge of God points to the same conclusion we have already arrived at: our knowledge of the indwelling Persons is quasi-experimental, experimental in a certain way (*quodammodo*), i.e., inasmuch as it is joined to an *affective* experience of love and taste.

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Transfertur enim experientiae nomen etiam ad intellectualem cognitionem, sicut etiam ipsa nomina sensuum, ut visus et auditus . . ." Cf. also *Sum. theol.* 1, q. 54, a. 5, ad obj. It might also be noted here that in a technical sense, borrowed from Aristotle, *experimentum* (*empeiria*) is taken by St. Thomas to designate the fruit of a comparison of many singulars stored up in the memory: it is peculiar to man, pertains to the cogitative power, and is called particular reason, whose function is to compare individual intentions, just as the intellect compares universal intentions (cf., for example, *Expositio in 12 Metaph.*, lib. 1, lect. 1, alia quidem). Moreover, while experimental knowledge, in this Aristotelian sense, is discursive knowledge, it is said to be shared by angels and demons in an analogous manner, inasmuch as they know objects which are present and sensible but without any discursus: "Praeterea, Isidorus dicit quod daemones per experientiam multa cognoscunt. Sed experimentalis cognitio est discursiva: ex multis enim memoriis fit unum experimentum, et ex multis experimentis fit unum universale, ut dicitur in fine Poster., et in principio Metaphys. Ergo cognitio angelorum est discursiva" (*Sum. theol.* 1, p. 58, a. 3, obj. 3). "Ad tertium dicendum quod experientia in angelis et daemonibus dicitur secundum quamdam similitudinem, prout scilicet cognoscunt sensibilia praesentia; tamen absque omni discursu" (*ibid.*, ad 3m). Finally, as we shall see immediately below in the text, *quaedam experientia* is taken by St. Thomas to signify an affective rather than cognoscitive experience, designating a *complacentia* of the appetite in its object.

<sup>118</sup> *Sum. theol.* 1-2, q. 15, a. 1, c. Cf. also ad 2m: ". . . sentire proprie dictum ad apprehensivam potentiam pertinet: sed secundum similitudinem cuiusdam experientiae, pertinet ad appetitivam. . ." It may also be noted that when describing spiritual taste or *sapor*, St. Thomas often speaks in the same restrictive terms—*quasi sapida* (*Sum. theol.* 1, q. 43, a. 4, ad 2m; 2-2, q. 45, a. 2, obj. 2), *quamdam experientiam dulcedinis* (*ibid.* 1-2, q. 112, a. 5), *saporem quamdam* (*ibid.* 2-2, q. 45, a. 2, ad 2m).

## CONCLUSION

These pages began with the fact that the just man, according to St. Thomas, enjoys a quasi-experimental knowledge of the divine Persons sent to live with him in his soul. Now that we have studied this doctrine in its historical context, we can easily understand its meaning. For, as we have seen, immediately before and at the time St. Thomas was writing his theology it was commonly taught, especially at the University of Paris, that the knowledge necessary for the invisible mission must be more than inform faith: it must be accompanied by supernatural love and the spiritual taste and delectation that this love brings. What is more, such knowledge was commonly called affective or experimental knowledge by the Schoolmen of the time, because it is linked to the affective experience of love and spiritual delectation. Now it was in line with this tradition that St. Thomas insisted that the just man's knowledge of the divine Persons sent to inhabit his soul must needs be not merely inform faith but knowledge accompanied by charity, that is to say, experimental knowledge. Moreover, such knowledge belongs to wisdom, since the spiritual taste and connaturality resulting from the affective union with God through charity afford the just man a basis for a correct estimation of God and His creatures.

Therefore, one thing above all appears to be clear: whatever is to be said philosophically or theologically about the theories of Gardeil and Garrigou-Lagrange, historically they are found gratuitous: as far as we have been able to discover, there is no historical evidence in the writings of St. Thomas, of his predecessors, or of his contemporaries to support the theories of immediate, supraincidental or mediate, supradiscursive cognition. These theories apparently are based on the modern meaning of the word "experimental." They can hardly be said to render the meaning of the term as it was used in the time of St. Thomas and by St. Thomas himself.

As for Galtier's interpretation of our experimental knowledge of the divine Persons, we may merely say that while it is certainly true that for St. Thomas, as for his immediate predecessors and contemporaries, the expression "experimental knowledge" was used to denote discursive cognition, the discursive aspect of experimental knowledge was not to the point when Thomas applied the term to our knowledge of the

divine Persons sent to our souls on an invisible mission. It is true that "experimental knowledge" at that time was applied to discursive knowledge based on an *experimentum*. But it was also used to signify knowledge that is accompanied by an affective experience of love and taste. Now, as we have seen, it was for this latter reason and in this latter sense that the term was employed by St. Thomas when describing our knowledge of the divine Persons. That this affective experience might constitute or contribute to an *experimentum* from which the presence of the divine Persons in the soul could be conjectured or deduced was irrelevant to Thomas' purpose and thought when explaining the Augustinian adage *mihi est cognosci*. He was not intent on describing our knowledge of God's presence or of our state of grace but our knowledge of the divine Person who "is sent when He is known." And what he tells us is that He is sent when He is known, not by inform faith, but by knowledge informed by charity. And it is for this reason and in this sense that he calls it experimental or affective knowledge, i.e., knowledge which is joined to the savorous and affective experience brought by divine charity.

But if the question be pressed, Is *quasi experimentalis cognitio* discursive knowledge? we must reply, in all fairness, that the only legitimate presumption is that it is. For while this was not the point St. Thomas was making when he said that our knowledge of the divine Persons is quasi-experimental (the point was simply that it is knowledge which is joined to love), it is nevertheless a historical fact that *experimentalis cognitio* designated a knowledge which was discursive; and St. Thomas himself gives us no reason to suppose that he meant to exclude this discursive quality from the knowledge he described as experimental.

The modern exponents of the theories of suprainentional or supra-discursive cognition do advance various texts from St. Thomas' writings to support their views. But when confronted with these texts, the impartial reader must confess that these theories appear to be read into the texts rather than begotten by them. The impartial reader cannot help feeling that those modern writers who find the theories of suprainentional or supradiscursive knowledge in the texts of St. Thomas do so only because they are already so committed to these beautiful and ingenious explanations that they unconsciously

read them into the texts and not because such theories are really to be found there.

Let us take a few examples. The champions of immediate, supra-intentional knowledge assert that our quasi-experimental knowledge of the divine Persons is to be compared to the loving knowledge which a soul has of itself;<sup>114</sup> then, analyzing what St. Thomas has to say about this self-consciousness, they build up their case. We may meet this argument at its first premise: Why, one wonders, is our quasi-experimental knowledge of the divine Persons to be compared to the loving knowledge which the soul has of itself? St. Thomas neither makes nor suggests such a comparison. Nor does he describe the soul's knowledge of itself as experimental. We must conclude that one who studies St. Thomas in this fashion is surely using a misleading method.

A favorite text of the proponents of both suprainentional and supradiscursive knowledge is taken from 2-2, q. 45, a. 2. Let us cite the whole passage:

Sapientia importat quandam rectitudinem iudicii secundum rationes divinas. Rectitudo autem iudicii potest contingere dupliciter: uno modo, secundum perfectum usum rationis; alio modo, propter connaturalitatem quandam ad ea de quibus iam est iudicandum. Sicut de his quae ad castitatem pertinent per rationis inquisitionem recte iudicat ille qui didicit scientiam moralem: sed per quandam connaturalitatem ad ipsa recte iudicat de eis ille qui habet habitum castitatis. Sic igitur circa res divinas ex rationis inquisitione rectum iudicium habere pertinet ad sapientiam quae est virtus intellectualis: sed rectum iudicium habere de eis secundum quandam connaturalitatem ad ipsa pertinet ad sapientiam secundum quod donum est Spiritus sancti: sicut Dionysius dicit, in 2 cap. *de Div. Nom.*, quod Hierotheus est perfectus in divinis *non solum discens, sed et patiens divina*. Huiusmodi autem compassio sive connaturalitas ad res divinas fit per caritatem, quae quidem unit nos Deo: secundum illud I *ad Cor.* 6: *Qui adhaeret Deo unus spiritus est*. Sic igitur sapientia quae est donum causam quidem habet in voluntate, scilicet caritatem: sed essentiam habet in intellectu, cuius actus est recte iudicare, ut supra habitum est.

Now, to see in this passage a description of sapiential knowledge which is direct, immediate, supra-intentional perception of the divine Persons seems to the impartial reader of the text a bit farfetched. But this is how Gardeil<sup>115</sup> and Philips<sup>116</sup> both read it. Must we not conclude that

<sup>114</sup> Gardeil, *Structure*, pp. 240-41. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 94-124; Philips, *art. cit.* (supra n. 10) p. 179.

<sup>115</sup> "L'Expérience," p. [76].    <sup>116</sup> *Art. cit.*, p. 180.



they are reading their own preconceived ideas into the text instead of finding them there? The case for Garrigou-Lagrange, on the other hand, appears more solid. He concludes from this text that our quasi-experimental knowledge, which belongs to wisdom, is not discursive.<sup>117</sup> For St. Thomas says that the gift of wisdom forms right judgments about divine things not "per rationis inquisitionem" but "per quamdam connaturalitatem." Here one must raise the question: Does St. Thomas necessarily mean by this to exclude from the gift of wisdom all discourse of reason or rather merely the scientific, complex, and sophisticated reasonings of the theologian, philosopher, or moralist? It is true that the chaste man does not form his judgments about chastity in the scientific way the moralist does; but does this mean that because he does it without study and rigorous argument, he therefore forms his judgments without any discourse of reason at all? Rather, does not the chaste man, in forming his judgments on what is chaste, engage in a spontaneous and natural reasoning from analogy, comparing the case with his own habit of, and love for, purity? Indeed, there is here no proof that St. Thomas understood knowledge by connaturality as excluding all such simple reasoning and therefore as direct and supra-discursive cognition of God.<sup>118</sup> Of course, one who is precommitted to the theory of Garrigou-Lagrange may interpret this passage from St. Thomas in accordance with his theory. But one who is impartial and objective will not be so readily persuaded; he will admit that while such an interpretation is possible, it is scarcely required by the text. He will, in a word, ask for more convincing proof.

More convincing proof, however, is not forthcoming. In general, the argument of these modern authors takes the following form. They cite one or more of the passages in which St. Thomas describes our knowledge of the divine Persons as quasi-experimental; then they gratuitously assert their own interpretation, relying, we must assume, on the modern meaning of the word "experimental."<sup>119</sup> First of all, as

<sup>117</sup> *L'Amour de Dieu* 1, 183-84.

<sup>118</sup> Even John of St. Thomas points out that the gift of wisdom can be discursive because of our imperfection in the present life (cf. *Cursus theologicus*, nos. 655-57). The reasons John gives for this assertion are two: the gifts do not destroy but fulfil and perfect the mode of operation connatural to man as a rational being; secondly, we do not generally experience in ourselves any such light which enables us to know truths about any discourse of reason (*ibid.*, no. 760).

<sup>119</sup> M. G. Miralles, O.P., "El conocimiento por connaturalidad en teología," *XI Semana*

we have noted, this is very faulty method. Secondly, this method has led them to a grievous error about the authentic meaning attached to *experimentalis cognitio* by St. Thomas. Thirdly, on this erroneous interpretation they have erected a whole system of mystical theology. Now their mystical theology may be correct; indeed, their theories of experimental knowledge may be true to reality. But the point of this article is that they are not Thomistic, as their proponents would have us believe.

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*española de teología* (Madrid, 1952) p. 377, asserts that experimental knowledge is intuitive and without any discourse of reason. As evidence he simply refers to *Sum. theol.* 2-2, q. 97, a. 2, ad 2m, and cites S. I. Dockx, O.P., *Fils de Dieu par grâce*; J. G. Arintero, O.P., *Evolución mística*; and F. Marin-Sola, O.P., *Evolución homogénea del dogma católico*. In examining the authorities cited, we find that they too base their interpretation on the modern meaning of experimental knowledge, making no effort to determine whether the meaning was the same seven hundred years ago. Another instance of reading one's own views into the text of St. Thomas is given by A. Patfoort, O.P., in *Bulletin thomiste* 10 (1957-59) 539-43.